

THE TORREON (Stone Fort)
Manzano, Torrance County, New Mexico

HABS
NM
29-MANZ
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Southwest District

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
John Gaw Meem, District Officer,
Camino del Monte Sol, Santa Fe, New Mexico

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Owner: Mrs. Rostia Sanchez, Manzano, New Mexico.

Date of Erection: Circa 1840.

Architect: None.

Builder: Tomas Sanchez.

Present Condition: Poor. Roof and part of second story of Torreon destroyed; parts of adjacent building destroyed, leaving three sections standing, which have been remodeled recently; small store room added to north end of west wing.

Number of Stories: One and two.

Materials of Construction: Foundations, stone; floors, earth and pine; exterior walls, stone and adobe mortar; interior walls, adobe; roof, flat adobe; new metal roof over west wing.

Other Existing Records: Written Records: Hurt, Wesley, "Indian Influence at Manzano", El Palacio Magazine, November, 1939, p. p. 245, Twitchell, R. E., "The Leading Facts of New Mexican History", Volume 4, p. p. 496. Photographs: East and West elevations of Torreon, Nusbaum, Jesse, Museum of New Mexico, 1916; view of Torreon, Chas. T. Lummis, Southwest Museum, Los Angeles, California, 1885.

Additional Data: The foundations of all the existing buildings and the exterior wall of the Torreon are field stone laid up in adobe mortar. The exterior and interior walls of the one story buildings are adobe brick and adobe mortar, except for a portion of the north wall of north wing, which has native logs, six to eight inches in diameter, set vertically in the ground, on the outside, showing Indian influence. These are backed by a wall of adobe, about eighteen inches thick and are chinked with adobe mortar. The small room at the north end of the west wing is constructed of logs, approximately eight inches in diameter, set on end, tamped earth floor and adobe soil roof over pine slabs, laid with sawed side up, on six to seven inch diameter vigas. The first floor of the Torreon is sawed boards over cross vigas, seven to nine inches in diameter, spaced from 28 to 33 inches on center.

These are supported, at the middle, by a larger viga, about 11 inches in diameter, spanning the building near the middle. The floors of one story buildings, except the small room at north end of west wing, are pine boards, 8 to 12 inches wide, supported on wood joists. The roofs over existing portions of building consist of 6 to 8 inches of adobe soil placed on pine boards, laid across vigas, 7 to 9 inches in diameter, spaced from 20 to 22 inches on centers and 5" x 10" sawed beams, spaced 24 inches on centers, in the west wing. A pitched roof, of corrugated metal on 2" x 4" rafters and with gables of 8 to 12 inch vertical boards, has been constructed over a portion of the west wing. This has been added within the last eight years. The roofs have drainage spouts (canales) made of two inch plank. Parapet walls are adobe brick and some field stone with adobe mortar. The outside faces of all exterior walls, including log portions, are plastered with adobe mortar applied by hand. The interiors are plastered with adobe plaster over which has been placed a thin finish coat of native gypsum (yeso). The existing windows and doors, except the door in lower story of the Torreón, are modern.

The building as originally constructed consisted of a one story building completely enclosing an inner court (Patio) with the two-story Torreón at the northeast corner. The outer walls contained no doors or windows, except a few small openings, heavily barred by massive wood grilles, near the ceiling, and the one pair of wide, massive doors at the entrance on the east side of the square. All windows and doors, including those in the Torreón, opened on to the patio. A porch (portal), paved with stone flagging, and with native log columns supporting hewed corbels and beams, and the roof of vigas, sabinos, brush and adobe soil, extended along the south, west and north sides of the patio. The roof, including that over the Torreón, main building, portal and the entrance (Zaguan) consisted of 6 to 8 inches of adobe soil spread and tamped over twigs and brush placed on small logs (sabinos), 2 to 3 inches in diameter, laid across logs (vigas) 8 to 10 inches in diameter. The roof of main building extended out over the portal with a parapet wall along the outer wall and over the portal beams. The roof was graded to canales (spouts) extending through the parapet walls, for drainage.

The old well, which is still in use, is located near the northeast corner of the original patio.

The opening, or space, between the Torreón and the north wing, now closed by a wooden gate, was closed by a thick adobe wall extending up to the under side of the portal roof.

Entrance to the patio and building was through the roofed passage Zaguan at the east side of the patio, between the Torreón and the north end of the east wing. The entrance doorway was a pair of massive, hewed timber doors pivoted at the top and bottom at each side. The doors were locked on the inside by means of a heavy hewed timber bar. A small door was framed in one of the larger, which could be used without having to open the large doors.

The first or ground floors were of tamped earth. The second floor of the Torreón was hand-hewed plank placed on vigas similar to the existing construction.

The first story of the Torreón, including the main viga, is original. The second story, including cross vigas and sawed boards has been reconstructed at a date sometime prior to 1916, as the Musbaum photographs indicate.

On each floor of the Torreón a fireplace, constructed of small stone and adobe, was built against the outer wall. These have been destroyed but their location can still be traced on the wall.

A trap door in the second floor gave access to the second story, a ladder being used.

The lower story contained a smaller room, built at one side, for storage purposes. This has been destroyed.

The fort, including the building, patio and Torreón, was built by Tomas Sanchez for use as a residence for himself and family and, as the occasion arose, for the use of the other villagers against Indian raids.

"Whenever a raiding party of Indians was sighted approaching Manzano, a drum was beaten and the church bells rung. All the women, old people, and children fled to the fort and plaza, leaving the vigilantes and able-bodied men to fight the raiders." Hurt, Wesley, El Palacio Magazine, November, 1939, p.p. 246.

The above information, relative to the history of the fort, was furnished verbally by Mrs. Rosita Sanchez, the present owner, and granddaughter of Tomas Sanchez.

Mrs. Sanchez and members of her family reside in the remaining sections of the original main building. The round stone building (Torreón), the lower story of which remains, is now

used as a storage room.

Nothing definite regarding the date the building was constructed could be obtained; however, a sample of the second story main viga shows by tree ring analysis to have been cut about 1840. This is not definite as the sample was taken from an end projecting outside the wall and exposed to the weather.

Trent Thomas

Trent Thomas,
Architect in Charge,
HABS, Southwest Unit.

Approved

Oct. 1

1940

John Gaw Meem

John Gaw Meem,
District Officer.

TW 10/28/40